GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1109
ANSWERED ON:25.11.2002
WITHDRAWAL OF CONDITIONAL CLEARANCE TO BT COTTON
MAHBOOB ZAHEDI;S. SAIDUZZAMAN

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the failure of the BT Cotton and BT Maize planted in Rajasthan as reported in the ` Economic Times` dated November7, 2002;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have requestedfor immediate withdrawal of the conditional clearance to commercial planting of BT Cotton;

(d) if so, the response of the Government thereto; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to ensure representation of such NGOs in the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) etc. for protection of public interest ?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R.BAALU)

(a),(b) ,(c) & (d) Bt Cotton is the first and only transgenic crop approved by GEAC for commercial cultivation in India. The three approved hybrid varieties (Bt MECH-162, Bt. MECH-184, Bt. MECH-12) are presently under cultivation only in six states namel Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.Some non-governmental organizations have expressed apprehension about cultivation of Bt Cotton. Some of the fields where these hybrid varieties are being cultivated, have recently been monitored by a sub-committee constituted by this Ministry. The report indicates that the performance of Bt. Cotton is satisfactory. The fourth Bt Cotton hybrid (MECH- 915) variety suitable for cultivation in northern states (Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan) has not been approved by the GEAC.

(e) The GEAC is a statutory body comprising of Experts (subject specialist) and representatives from the respective line Ministries. In the interest of public, the Ministry is regularly organizing workshops and meetings.

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